

21. A method for managing health care-related information about a patient as electronic records over a communications network comprising:

electronically handling the records as a plurality of component fields, each component field associated with a particular type of patient data;

determining access rules to selectively govern access to the component fields;

applying the access rules before the component fields are accessed;

providing access to a first predetermined amount of the component fields of the records when a first access parameter is present; and

providing access to a second predetermined amount of the component fields of the records when a second access parameter different from the first access parameter is present, the second predetermined amount not identical to the first predetermined amount.

22. The method of Claim 21 wherein:

the first access parameter relates to desired access by a first group of individuals;

the second access parameter relates to desired access by a second group of individuals not identical to the first group of individuals;

the providing access to the first predetermined amount of the component fields includes providing access to the first group of individuals, the first predetermined amount relating to a first medical condition of the patient; and

the providing access to the second predetermined amount of the component fields includes providing access to the second group of individuals, the second predetermined amount relating to a second medical condition of the patient.

23. The method of Claim 21 wherein the determining access rules includes considering a role of a person desiring access, the method further comprising evaluating a login identifier associated with the person, the login identifier associated with the role of the person.

24. The method of Claim 21 wherein:

the determining access rules includes considering a role of a person desiring access;

the first access parameter relates to desired access by a health care provider; and

the first predetermined amount of the component fields is all of the component fields.

25. The method of Claim 24 wherein the second access parameter relates to desired access by a billing or accounting personnel and wherein the second predetermined amount of the component fields is a fraction of all of the component fields.

26. The method of Claim 25 wherein the component fields include patient welfare component fields relating to information about health of the patient, the method further comprising denying the billing or accounting personnel access to the patient welfare component fields.

27. The method of Claim 21 wherein:

the determining access rules includes considering a role of a person desiring access;

the second access parameter relates to desired access by a personal relation who is not a medical care provider of the patient; and

the second predetermined amount of the component fields is a fraction of all of the component fields.

28. The method of Claim 21 wherein:

the first access parameter relates to desired access by a first group of individuals;

the second access parameter relates to desired access by a second group of individuals not identical to the first group of individuals;

the providing access to the first predetermined amount of the component fields includes providing access to the first group of individuals, the first predetermined amount indicative of good health of the patient; and

the providing access to the second predetermined amount of the component fields includes providing access to the second group of individuals and denying access to the first group of individuals, the second predetermined amount indicative of bad health of the patient.

29. The method of Claim 21 wherein:

the first access parameter relates to desired access by a first group of individuals;

the second access parameter relates to desired access by a second group of individuals not identical to the first group of individuals;

the providing access to the first predetermined amount of the component fields includes providing access to the first group of individuals, the first predetermined amount satisfying a first criterion about monetary amounts owed by the patient; and

the providing access to the second predetermined amount of the component fields includes providing access to the second group of individuals, the second predetermined amount satisfying a second criterion about monetary amounts owed by the patient.

30. The method of Claim 21 wherein the determining access rules includes:

associating with one of the component fields permitted transactions selected from the group consisting of create, display, modify, and transmit, or any combination thereof;

associating with the one component field unpermitted transactions selected from the group consisting of create, display, modify, and transmit, or any combination thereof; and

restricting manipulation of the one component field to only the permitted transactions.

31. The method of Claim 30 wherein the determining access rules includes considering a role of a person desiring access.

32. The method of Claim 21 wherein the determining access rules includes allowing the patient to determine a portion of the access rules.

33. A method for handling health care-related records of a patient comprising:

enabling an electronic database to store the records;

defining a threshold event relating to both physiological and nonphysiological data about the patient;

programming the database or an associated computer with the threshold event;

analyzing the records stored in the database to determine if the threshold event has occurred; and

using the database or the associated computer to automatically provide an electronic notification, that is not an offer to have medical services performed, to an interested entity upon occurrence of the threshold event.

34. The method of Claim 33 wherein the records contain information received from various communications devices coupled to the database or the associated computer.

35. The method of Claim 33 wherein the threshold event relates to monetary amounts owed by the patient to a health care provider and wherein the electronic notification includes a request to make payments to the health care provider after services are performed.

36. The method of Claim 35 wherein the interested entity is the patient.

37. The method of Claim 33 wherein:

the threshold event relates to receipt by the database of an anticipated record;

the interested entity is a personal relation of the patient; and

the electronic notification includes at least a portion of the record.

38. A method for managing patient health care related information comprising:

configuring an electronic database to maintain the information as records;

handling the records as a plurality of component fields, the component fields associated with particular types of patient data; and

selectively organizing the records or component fields thereof according to selectable parameters based at least in portion upon the particular types of patient data.

39. The method of Claim 38 further comprising compiling the organized records or component fields thereof into an electronic file history that is storable in the electronic database for later access.

40. The method of Claim 38 wherein one of the selectable parameters concerns patient billing related data.